

URGENT

PRESS RELEASE

# INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE DE JURISTES - COMISION INTERNACIONAL DE JURISTAS  
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17 April 1978

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ( ) In Part ( ) In Full

( ) Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

## ATTACKS ON JUDGES AND LAWYERS IN ARGENTINA

In Argentina in the past four years:

- 23 judges and lawyers have been assassinated
- 41 judges and lawyers have 'disappeared' and are still unaccounted for, in some cases for more than a year
- 109 judges and lawyers are or have been in detention, even though the majority of them have not been charged with any offence, have not been tried, or even brought before a magistrate
- an indeterminate number of judges and lawyers have been forced to flee the country.

This is the tragic tally compiled in the first bulletin published in english and spanish by the Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, formed in January 1978 by the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva. The bulletin describes the conditions faced in Argentina by defence lawyers and by judges who try political cases.

After contrasting the political situation existing before and after the March 1976 coup, the bulletin gives a detailed description of the persecution of members of the judiciary and of those members of the legal profession who advise or undertake the defence of persons accused of political crimes. Many of them, as a result only of carrying out their professional duties, have been assassinated, kidnapped, jailed with or without trial, expelled from their posts, subjected to harassment and the ransacking of their belongings in their homes and offices, or forced to flee the country.

Lot 81D208

Box 4963 (2/12)

The report says that this

"places in jeopardy those principles which form an essential part of the concept of the Rule of Law. These principles include the right of all detainees to adequate legal assistance in their defence and the full freedom which must be assured to the defence lawyer to permit him to carry out the duties with which he is entrusted, regardless of the nature of the case".

The CIJL has written to the Argentine Government urging it to bring to an end this deplorable situation. It not only affects the fundamental freedoms of the judges and lawyers, but deprives thousands of political prisoners of their right to a proper defence and fair trial.